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SUMMER SURVEYING CAMP

A story of experiences in the summer camp required of all C. E.'s,
as related by Raymond Schmitt—C.E. '41



Out of the clear sky one fine day an instructor suddenly pops up with, "How many intend to go to camp this summer?" From here on you eat, sleep, and think camp amidst the whirlwind of preparations. And you've got to think about those finals coming up, doggone it.

First there were a couple of meetings at which we discussed and were advised as to what we needed. Rex Zara came to one of the meetings with a white sport coat. He was emphatically advised to leave this article behind, as it just wouldn't do at all out in the brush. A final checkup of the roster indicated a total of 28 fellows, 4 instructors, and the cook. The instructors were Mr. Montz, Mr. Wall, Mr. Sloane, and Charley Guard. The day before departure we piled all our duds together in the instrument room in Brown Hall and packed the equipment. Everything was prepared for loading on the trucks early the next morning.

Finally the promised day arrived and we were all set to shove off. And it wasn't a bright, sunny day either; in fact it was raining. Just ask Roger Sunbury about that. He got a good soaking. Our means of transportation was a chartered bus of the Valley Public Service and our destination Somerset, Ohio in Perry County about 65 miles southeast of Columbus.

On the way Roy Underwood, Bill Apple, Bob Smith and "Zara" got started on some songs. And man, what jokes floated around. Yes, you guessed it, some corny ones too. Everybody joined in the

festivities. In fact, "Apple" put so much feeling into his participation that by the time we got to Somerset he was so hoarse he could hardly whisper.

Lunch was eaten in one of Somerset's spacious restaurants. Don't take this too literally. Besides, we were a mite early for lunch so that by the time we got food we were famished.

Somerset is a unique little town. At its center is a big square with a statue of General Sheridan, a Civil War general, who was born here. Something that holds everyone's interest is the engraving above the Court House door. It reads: "May Justice Be Done If the Heavens Should Fall."

Finally, we proceeded to a point about two miles south of Somerset. After navigating a number of hills we finally came to a crest from which we could see our future camp site, and let me tell you it was so steep down into the valley that the bus driver had to keep her in first with his foot on the brake to boot.

After storing the instruments in a neighboring barn until we had a place prepared for them in camp we footed it down to the camp site. The site was located beside a little creek that looked harmless enough, but took on immense proportions in time of heavy rains as we later found out. Crossing the creek at that point was a covered bridge, one of the few left in Ohio.

We all piled in right away to pitch camp. While the majority of the fellows unloaded the trucks, the rest of us cleared the pasture space allotted to us by one of the neighboring farmers. In due time the tents were going up. Everybody helped with the mess tent and the cook shack. In all, about fourteen tents went up. After everything was set, we drew lots to see who belonged where. The usual number was three to a tent. My tent mates were "Joe" Early, congenially called "Little Joe" because of his size, and Rex Zara, dubbed "Zero." We spent the rest of the day in fixing things to our liking. Some of the fellows chopped wood for "Cookie" and stacked it in the cook shack. Stanley Book, Harold Hasted and a couple of the instructors set the first hubs in the primary traverse and took a polaris to obtain the azimuth of the first live A-A₂ so that the transit party could start off with a bang the next morning.

At six A.M., the following morning, we were rudely awakened, as we were for the next six weeks, by the strains of "You gotta get up, you gotta get up, you gotta get up in the morning" played by our bugler, "Lersch." And so we started a typical day by dipping our puss into a pan of nice cold water. Oh, what could be more invigorating. (Some more sleep could be, you betcha.) Things were pretty glum until we saw the heaping platters of pancakes and all the syrup that "Cookie" was dishing up for us. Say, man, when the K.P. called, "Come and get it," at precisely 6:30, a cyclone struck the mess tent. You had to be careful in reaching for extra helpings because you were liable to pull back a bloody stump.

Immediately after everyone coaled up, lists of current field parties were posted. One party went ahead to set the hubs. They were followed by the transit party. "Apple" and I drew the job of taping for the first few days. Man, if you thought you had any plumbing to do on the Campus, wait until you hit camp. Two parties were set to taping the primary traverse. Each line was double taped on both primary and sub traverses. By the end of the day we were pretty well broken in to our work and we got along fine. It was only at the start that we found it necessary to recheck a line the third time. At noon if we were a good distance from camp the K.P. brought out our lunches to us and we rested for a half hour. Then at it again the rest of the afternoon. Just before six we decided to call it a day and started for camp. Some of the boys took a dip down the creek before supper. After consuming a magnificent supper like a pack of starving wolves, we usually got a game of softball going until dark. Poker and black jack predominated the rest of the evening, and, may I add, every evening. Saturday nights we went to Somerset. On week days the place was like a tomb, but on Saturday nights it was plenty lively. One of the amazing things was that there seemed to be more women than men. Usually it's the other way around, you know. Some of the



"Babes" were O.K. too. At any rate some of the fellows thought so. You might quiz "Apple" and "Lersch" on that subject.

Our job here at Somerset like that at our second camp near New Straitsville was to make a contour map of a certain area for the State Department of Conservation. Included on this map were all property lines, primary and sub traverses, all hubs that were set and their elevations, the present stream course, and any other important topography which would be affected by the rising of water. The map was needed for the future construction of an earth dam, i.e., to determine how far the water would back up for a specified height of dam.

To accomplish this, a bench was established at the job by running levels up from a U.S. bench mark. From this bench, then, the elevations of all hubs set were determined. Topography was taken with a transit and stadia. Knowing the elevation of a hub and the height of the instrument, contours were traced around the terrain. The transit was oriented originally by azimuth on the traverse line. When a contour point on the terrain was located the pointing of instrument gave the azimuth, and the distance was read on the stadia rod. A "topo" party usually consisted of a transitman, note-keeper, rodman, and in our case a man with the brush hook. Angles were read to the nearest five minutes as they could not be plotted closer for the scale used on the map. Where there were fairly even breaks in the terrain and no abrupt changes in the direction of any contour, cross sections were taken, i.e., the instrument was kept pointed along one line while the rodman moved up and down to get the distance of all possible contours which could be taken from that station. If all the topography could not be taken from any of the main stations, sub stations were set and tied in with the main traverse. The required topography was then obtained. On the primary and sub traverses the transit party turned off all angles by repetition, taking three direct and three reverse readings.

All field notes were taken to the office located in the neighboring farmer's home. Here the notes were plotted first on ordinary drawing paper in pencil. After this was finished, fine English tracing paper was placed over the original and the map was completely redrawn in ink. It was from this inking then that blue-prints were made for the State Department of Conservation. There seems to be only one drawback to working in the field office. That is, the room must be kept closed so that moisture in the air will not dampen the map. This makes it a mite uncomfortable.

When there wasn't enough work for all of us, some were given a chance to polish up on their leveling. Mr. Sloane sent three level parties out one morning to run a half mile of levels all around the country.

"Zero" and I unfortunately comprised one of the parties. We all checked out below thirteen thousandths. Mr. Sloane thought that was a little bit too good so he chased us up the steep hill in the afternoon. In going up this hill we learned plenty about leveling. A word of advice, don't attempt to go straight up, for heaven's sake. You'll never get there, and, besides, you can't get very good results. In going up a hill foresights are usually very short while backsights are reasonably long. This brings the rod too close on the foresight for convenient reading. The thing to do is zigzag back and forth thereby balancing foresights and backsights pretty well. As you readily see, it is unnecessary to use the target in such close work. Mr. Sloane predicted we wouldn't check out in a long shot after coming back down, but two of the parties came closer than was expected.

What did the K. P. do? Well, here's the dope. To begin with, he was aroused in the early dawn around 5 A. M. by "Cookie." The morning chores consisted of setting the table for the gang. Since each fellow washed his own dishes it made the job that much softer. During the day he helped unload the grocery truck. If "Cookie" had any special wish it was executed. The grocery man also brought things that the fellows needed from town so the K. P. usually had a little list for him. At noon the K. P. brought the lunches out to the field parties with the mail. He set the supper table again and washed the Cookie's dishes together with the remaining table dishes. As a reward for a soft day's job, he usually had three or four pies in the chest to distribute amongst his friends. Boy, we had plenty of that good banana cream pie when "Zero" was K. P.

One afternoon we had a cloudburst. It rained far into the night. The creek was swollen, but we never expected the inevitable. It happened. Some of us had gone to bed to be rudely awakened by shouting. Swinging our legs to the ground from our cots, we were amazed to find them in water above the ankles which was flowing through the tent. We got up plenty quick then. Sure enough, the creek was above its banks and we were in the midst of a flood, by heck. We were all set to move out, but, fortunately, it came no higher.

The day before moving to our second camp near New Straitsville we spent the entire morning adjusting the instruments.

It rained again the day we moved to Little Monday Township, Perry County, New Straitsville, Ohio. There was a little accident that day too. While putting up Cookie's shack again, one of the boys was holding part of the roof up with a brush hook. The brush hook slipped out and hit "Pash" Dickinson on the head. If the brush hook had been sharp, which it luckily wasn't, he may have been a goner. However,

a quick trip to a doctor in New Lexington fixed it up with a couple of stitches.

We were now in the middle of the Wayne National Forest. It was here that we named a lot of our tents. One, which was infested with wood ticks, was named "Wood Tick Tavern" by its inhabitants, "Apple" and "Underwood." Maybe some of you Columbus fellows saw their picture in the Citizen. Another tent was found to contain a couple of black widow spiders, so it was designated as the "Black Widow Inn." "Little Joe", "Zero", and I found our end of town to be occupied by frogs, so we dubbed it "Frog Hollow." And then we had a pitched battle with mosquitoes as big as horseflies. It sounded like a squadron of German dive bombers every night. We finally remedied that situation by rigging up mosquito netting and spraying our tents. Keep that in mind. It may come in handy again this year.

We also met up with gnats, land moccasins, copperheads, and large black snakes. This reminds me of one encounter we had with a snake. Three of us went out on a trouble party one afternoon. As we were walking along on either side of a path left by wagon wheels, two of us suddenly stopped. We had noticed a beautiful colored snake in the middle of the path. As we bent down to get a closer look the snake suddenly became aware of us. It raised its head like a cobra and spread out at the neck while emitting a hissing sound. Since we didn't know if it was venomous or not we took no chances. Devere Heffelfinger was carrying the brush hook so he swung and missed the first time due to the snake's motions. His second swing was good, however, and the snake was decapitated. Bringing it back to camp, we learned that it was a puff adder which is a harmless snake.

Besides the regular topography work, Dave Lindsay and I ran a cross section at the future dam site. It so happened that the three "C" boys were there the same day digging test pits to determine the type of underlying rock. In the valley was the swamp. The only dry spot was at the middle. "Lindsay" was running the level. When he reached the middle he calmly pulled out a camera and took pictures of the three "C" boys in the pits while I stood in the swamp up to my knees in water holding the rod. What was said as a result of that is unfit to print.

There was one party that always cleaned up on all the work and did any trouble jobs that they encountered in the office. This party was the "Crapper Crew." They did the dirty work, so to speak, but by gosh, after they completed their job there was no need to recheck any of it.

It was at this camp that many of the fellows had a chance to use Mr. Wall's new invention, the Simplex Solar Shield for determining the azimuth of a line more quickly and accurately, before it was even pat-

ented. Whenever there was a spare moment Mr. Wall's party could be found taking a "solar."

New Straitsville is in the coal mine region of the state and also the spot of the mine fires. We had the fortune of seeing some spots where smoke issued from the ground as we passed along the back roads.

We went to town with Jimmy, the son of the farmer where we had our field office. He had a big coal truck and about eighteen of us piled on every time for a fee of fifteen or twenty cents apiece. We tore around New Straitsville, through Shawnee where we yelled like a bunch of wild Indians being inspired by the name of the town, and into New Lexington, the county seat, where we either spent an evening at the show or danced in a lively little spot. One Sunday a truckload of us went to Logan, Ohio with "Jim," where we went swimming at the municipal swimming pool.



From this camp we also took on a job at Logan. This was done for the sportsmen of Logan who wanted to know what effect a dam would have across the Hocking River. This called for the tracing of only about two contours upstream along the river's banks. Transportation to and from was provided by a state car, a big eight-passenger Buick. "Zero" and I went down as rodmen one day. The mosquitoes were plenty tough along the river. To make matters worse the banks were infested with poison ivy. Now, here's a word of warning to anyone susceptible to it. For pete's sake, get an injection against ivy before going to camp or you'll regret it. Take it from me, it's extremely uncomfortable to have a dose. We also ran

into banks of rushes, the ideal home of mosquitoes. It was here too that we learned of the use of level rods for noting stadia distances. The only highlights of the day came when we hiked back to the road. We ran across a big patch of blackberries as wide as your thumb. We were so completely engrossed by this delicacy that we didn't note the time, so when we finally got back to the road the other party from across the river was looking for us. No harm done, though.

Once in a while some of us went to a swimming hole about three miles distant at Oreville. The water was nice and warm, but the peculiar thing was its sulphur content. In fact, you didn't dare get any of the water in your eyes or it would burn like fire. We learned of a short cut to the swimming hole, and as a result came upon a swinging bridge across a stream.

Near camp we also found a spring. A couple of the fellows fixed it up so that we could get water from it. Oh, boy, was that water good. "Cookie" used it for some of his specialties at times too. The K. P. got the water for him.

We chopped the week's wood for "Cookie" every Saturday. With all the fellows pitching in, it didn't take very long. Once we found some old logs up in the woods near the road. We rolled the logs down the hill to the road and loaded them on an old wagon we found. Then we pushed it into camp. That gave us plenty of wood.

On Sundays we usually had guests for dinner. Parents of the fellows came down to visit. We really put on a Sunday atmosphere and the dinner was superb. Many of the folks wonder how "Cookie" could possibly dish up such a wonderful meal with his facilities. Yes, he made a hit.

The last couple days of camp were pretty easy. Since there was nothing else to do, the boys pulled plenty tricks. "Apple" started the "I betcha" craze. I was one of his first victims. He bet me a nickle he could do more push ups than I. He executed thirty-three, and I managed thirty. Sucker! Some bet others that they couldn't extend their body horizontally by holding onto a vertical pole. "Lindsay" finally came through and did just that. Oh, and I might add, "Dave" is also a barber. He did a good emergency job on me one evening. We wanted to go to a dance that night and a fellow certainly wouldn't want to look like he stepped out of Skunk Hollow, now, would he?

Another favorite was a high kick to touch a rope six feet off the ground. Some of the big, lanky boys were good at that. Heffelfinger blazed away with his smoke ball and knocked some of the boys off their feet. Others executed standing jumps over saw buck. Many had sore shins after that.

Three of us went on a little expedition, by ourselves, into a little hand operated coal mine which was run

by one of the local farmers. We found it well supported with timbers, but it sure would be misery to stand in there for a whole day all bent over. There was simply no chance to straighten up. The coal is carted out by wheelbarrow and shoveled into a truck which hauls it away. The coal found in this area is a poor, soft coal.

The last afternoon, we took the tents down and loaded the equipment on the trucks again. "Cookie" prepared everything for the big bonfire and weiner roast scheduled for eleven o'clock that night. We got an immense bonfire started and had a good old-fashioned weiner roast with plenty of harmonizing, and jokes. Many cut themselves fifteen foot saplings and got the jump on the rest by roasting weiners before the fire cooled down. And it was still plenty hot at fifteen, too. We all slept on our cots under the mess tent or perhaps I should say that most of us slept. There was dirty work going on that night for the next morning the big mess tent was down on top of everybody. We finally got ourselves untangled and packed the rest of the stuff. Then the bus came tearing around the bend and we let out a big whoop.



Everybody piled in the bus and we were off to Columbus, home, and civilization after six weeks of being out in the sticks. But those six weeks were not idly spent. Each and every one of us got a lot out of it and gained a wealth of knowledge from all the things we experienced and ran up against. Each and every one of us still looks back on the great times we all had together. For some it was the last camp, for others there is another chance, but to all it will always remain in their memory as one of the greatest experiences in their lifetime.